



Dylan Tiger <[REDACTED]>

CU-CitizenAccess Inquiry

2 messages

Dylan Tiger <[REDACTED]>
To: mikeingramccb@gmail.com

Mon, Jul 22, 2019 at 11:56 AM

Hello Mr. Ingram,

My name is Dylan Tiger and I am a journalist working with CUCitizenAccess.org.

We are currently finishing up an investigation on the state of the county jails, and I had a few questions that I hope you or one of the other board members can answer.

After speaking with Sheriff Heuerman, he indicated that the 2013 and 2015 recommendations and studies on the county jails (which the County paid over \$200,000 for) are being discussed with the board. These include **24/7 medical staff coverage** and **renovating the Satellite jail** in order to close the Downtown jail. He said ultimately it was County Board decision.

To your knowledge, has Sheriff Heuerman or the board actually discussed these items? In addition, what are the obstacles you are aware of for achieving these recommendations?

If you are unsure, please forward my message to a County Board member who might know more about the topics. It would be greatly appreciated!

Thanks so much for your help,

Dylan Tiger
CU-CitizenAccess.org

Mike Ingram <mikeingramccb@gmail.com>
To: Dylan Tiger <[REDACTED]>

Mon, Jul 22, 2019 at 5:59 PM

Hi Dylan.

FYI I'm in the Faroe Islands right now with relatively spotty internet, so if you send a follow-up and I'm not quite as prompt please don't hold that against me. Just happened to have very good timing with me having a few moments with decent data speeds.

I've only been on the board since this past December, so obviously that means I wasn't around for the commissioning (and receipt) of those reports. Since I've been on the board, though, we've had a jail tour (not my first, but it was for a few board members) and discussion with the sheriff--that was I think our first facilities committee meeting back in December--and more recently had a facilities meeting where there was more of a focus on the jails. For that one, I tried very hard to rally people to come and participate during public comment via some social media postings like this one:
<https://www.facebook.com/electmikeingram/photos/a.276187926218658/620148085155972/?type=3>

We certainly had more comment that night than I think any facilities meeting in the past--and it beat basically every county board meeting I've attended outside of a few. (This felt like a win for me because I pushed pretty hard to have the jail discussion right after public comment and was told it wouldn't matter because no one would show up anyway.) Benjamin Beaupree was definitely there, though I don't know how much coverage he put up.

So yes, discussions are being had, and I've been trying to push them in the direction of what we can do to better serve the people who will have to stay there no matter how much we do in terms of new programs or cash bail reform. There is a subset of people who will stay there no matter how much we can improve the system, and currently they have very little space at the satellite to let those people do anything. One all-purpose room that serves as classroom, religious service space, staff meeting locale, client/lawyer private room, and more. Downtown has a library but the satellite doesn't. The rec space is open-air, so rec time in the winter is limited. And generally, even the holding areas present some problems for the sheriff and the officers, since separation is needed for lots of different reasons. The paper-taped-over-the-windows space for women prisoners (to maintain the no-line-of-sight requirements) is pretty ridiculous. The board is

at least generally aware of these issues but has largely been punting on jail-related issues for years. *Something* has to be done. I'm hopeful that with the current board makeup (along with the current sheriff) we'll be able to make sensible changes that will have restorative justice in mind. I've not seen or heard a proposal that doesn't require some expansion of the satellite jail, but I think if that's for more office space and for more program and quality of life space (ie. not an increase in the current bed total between spaces), then I think we'd be doing the community (communities, really) a service. Obstacles would obviously be largely budgetary, but I would also have to look to see if measures like this would need simple majority or if we would need fifteen votes. 12 Dems, 9 Reps, and 1 board chair who refers to Dems as "them" means that if it's more of a simple majority we'd need to do more haggling, I guess? Hard to tell. The Reps on the facilities committee--chair Stan Harper in particular--seem to be of the same mind that we need to get the satellite ready ASAP to be the one place. Their own visions for how to achieve that I guess you'd have to ask them. But when I've been talking about this stuff in facilities meetings he has seemed to agree with my position. (That or he's just so sick of dealing with the jail that he's ready for whatever can fix it without a fight?)

Kyle Patterson might be another good person to reach out to, as he has a couple more years under his belt and (I imagine) was expecting to have to deal with this as board chair when it seemed he'd be the chair. He's at kylepattersonccb@gmail.com

Okay, back to puffin spotting!

-Mike

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Mike Ingram
Champaign County Board, District 6